

C.O. Jelliff Company
354 Pequot Road
Southport
Fairfield County
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-291

HABS
CONN,
1-SOUPD,
5-

PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-291

C. O. JELLIFF COMPANY

Location: 354 Pequot Road, Southport, Fairfield County,
Connecticut

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.643960.4555080

Present Owner
and Occupant: C. O. Jelliff Manufacturing Corporation

Present Use: Factory for the manufacture of wire cloth and
wire products

Statement of
Significance: The C. O. Jelliff factory building is a characteristic
example of early twentieth-century New England corpor-
ate architecture. Practical, utilitarian concerns of a
wire manufacturing plant dictated the need for a func-
tional design. The building's location on Southport's
main thoroughfare, Pequot Road, necessitated that it
be architecturally presentable, if not interesting.
The factory is designed on a rectangular plan and is
constructed of dark brick with a low-pitched roof and
a profusion of window openings on the street facade.
It is compatible with the immediate environment and
an interesting solution to engineering and architec-
tural needs. Charles O. Jelliff founded his company
in 1880. His early wire products included sieves to
separate onion seeds and chaff for Southport's pros-
perous onion farming industry. With a growing demand
for wire products during the 20th century, the company
has continued to grow, becoming a large and distin-
guished manufacturer of wire products.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1903. The Southport "Chronicle" reported
on April 13, 1903: "The office in the new C. O. Jelliff
Co.'s factory is occupied, and the business of the concern
transferred now from the Water Street establishment to the
new model building on Pequot avenue."
2. Architect, builder: No information available.

3. Original and subsequent owners: Since the structure was erected in 1903, the factory and land upon which it stands have been owned by the C. O. Jelliff Company.
 4. Original plan and construction: The original factory, fronting on Pequot Road, was rectangular in plan, nine bays on the south facade, measuring one-hundred feet by fifty feet, and three stories high. The load bearing brick walls were laid in common bond with headers every sixth course, on the exterior and wooden joist framing on the interior. A low-pitched gable roof terminates in a simply molded wooden cornice which projects beyond the wall surface and returns at the gable ends. On the Pequot Road facade, most of the twelve-over-twelve light double-hung sash windows and an entry door at the eastern end have engaged granite sills and lintels. Two windows flanking a later doorway at the front facade's southwestern end have granite sills and brick voussoir arches overhead.
 5. Alterations and additions: The Jelliff Company's physical plant has expanded considerably since the early 20th century, now covering 20,000 square feet of land between Pequot Road north to the railroad tracks. The small industrial complex includes the original brick factory, three adjoining steelbeam constructed factory buildings, and four smaller detached structures.
- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Charles O. Jelliff founded his company in 1880. His early woven wire products included wire sieves to separate onion seeds and chaff, and bird cage and copper mesh. Because of a continuing growth in demand for his products, Jelliff moved to more spacious quarters in 1886. He ran a grocery and hardware store on the main level, and looms and wire working machines were housed on the second floor. New uses for wire mesh products were developed as the technology of American life became more sophisticated. The Southport "Chronicle" reported on February 23, 1892, "Contracts have been made for the large storehouse and shop which C. O. Jelliff & Co., are to build near the shop they already own near the depot. This is made necessary by the demand of the large and increasing business of the firm."

The 1903 plant was constructed to house a new power loom, producing twilled-herringbone brass screen to strain turpentine. The factory was powered by a kerosene engine until 1908, when the United Illuminating Company extended lines to Southport. In 1932, the company patented the manufacture of resistance wire

for precision resistors and elements, and in 1935 a second patent was issued the Jelliff company for the production of "Lektromesh" sheets, used for dipping baskets, fuel strainers, filters, and insect screening.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None.
2. Bibliography:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources: None.
 - b. Secondary and published sources:

Banks, Elizabeth V. H. This is Fairfield, 1639-1940.
New Haven: Walker-Rackliff Co., 1960.

The Fairfield "Advertiser," July 29, 1886;
September 2, 1886.

The Southport "Chronicle," May 21, 1891; February 25,
1892; March 3, 1892; April 13, 1903; June 18, 1903.

Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano
Staff Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
January 1979

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966 under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and architect John C. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky), and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. VanZanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in December 1978 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966.